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(54) **DOSAGE CONTROL SYRINGE**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 371 days.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

(51) **Int. Cl.**

A61M 5/00 (2006.01)

A61M 5/315 (2006.01)

A61M 5/31 (2006.01)

A dosage control syringe includes a barrel, a plunger, an adjustable lock member supported along a guide (such as a track) that is disposed along or outside an outer wall of the syringe barrel, and a stop member coupled to the plunger or the lock member. The stop member is generally aligned between the adjustable lock member and a portion of the plunger so as to limit or preclude further movement of the plunger upon engagement of the stop member with both the lock member and the plunger. The plunger is stopped by the lock member, via the stop member, when the plunger has traveled a predetermined distance set by the lock member, the distance corresponding to a desired dosage of fluid from the syringe.

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **A61M 5/31526** (2013.01); **A61M 5/3129** (2013.01); **A61M 5/3158** (2013.01); **A61M 5/31555** (2013.01); **A61M 5/31563** (2013.01); **A61M 2005/3126** (2013.01)

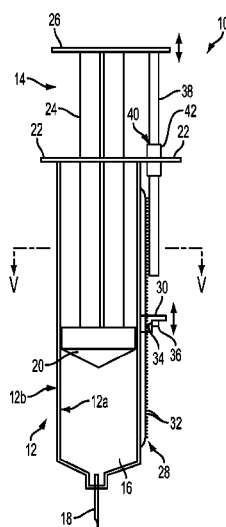
(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC A61M 2005/3126; A61M 5/31526; A61M 5/31555; A61M 5/31563

USPC 604/207–210

See application file for complete search history.

30 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



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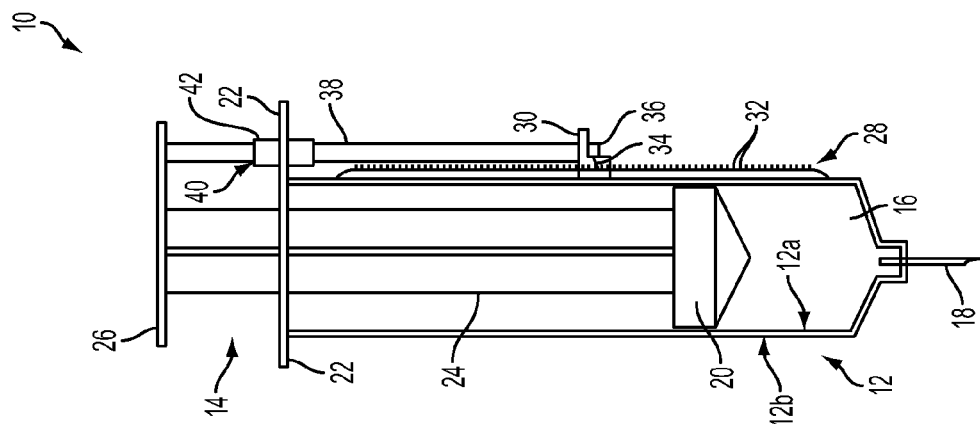


FIG. 2

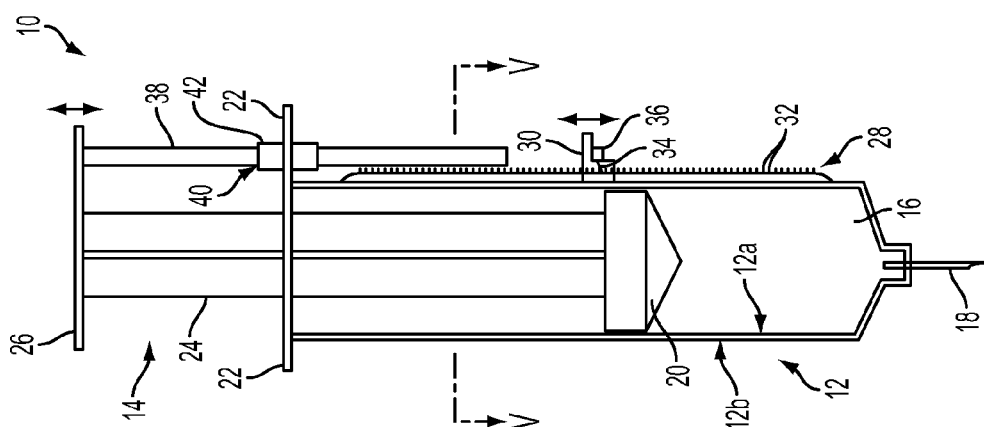


FIG. 1

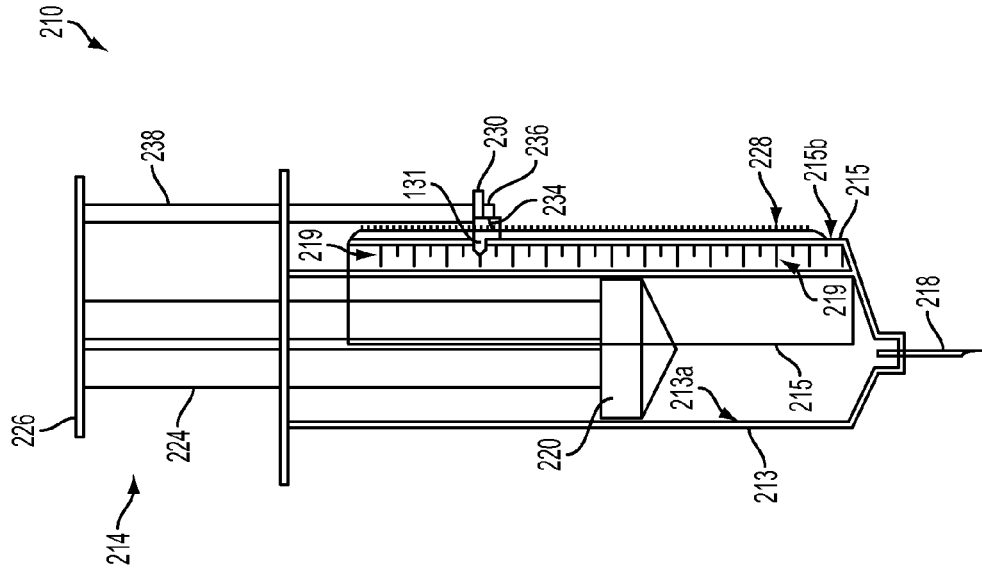


FIG. 4

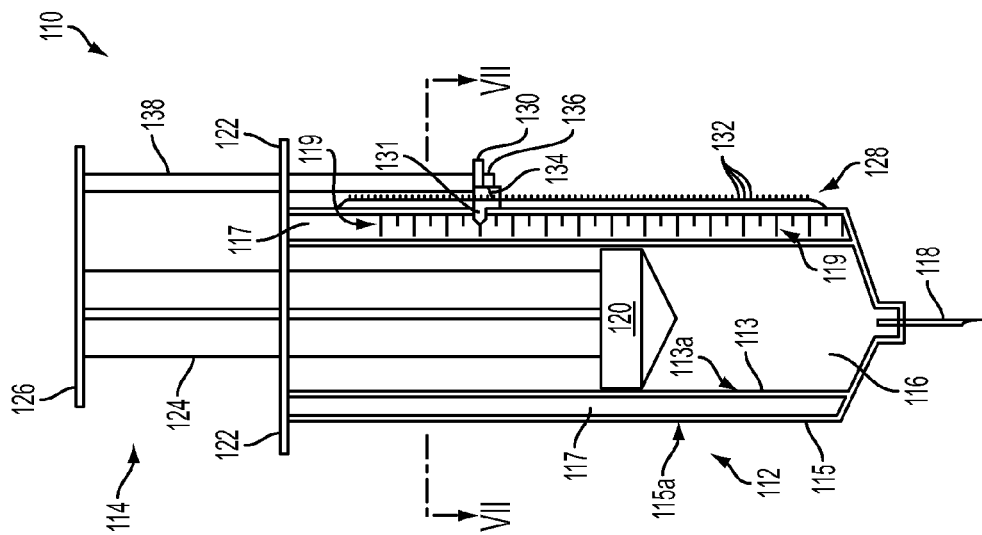


FIG. 3

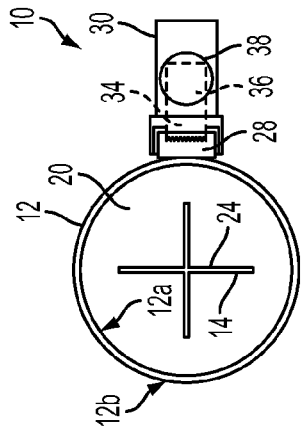


FIG. 5

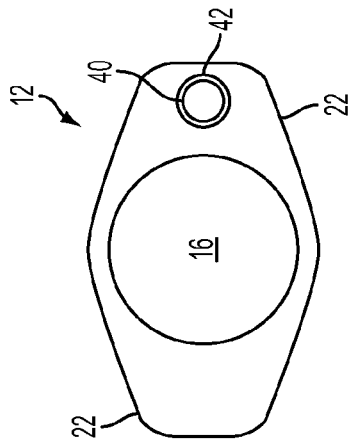


FIG. 6

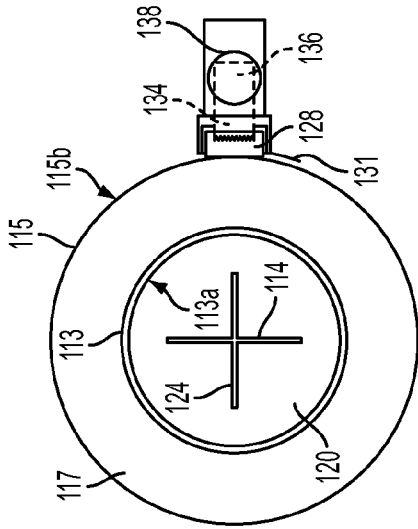


FIG. 7

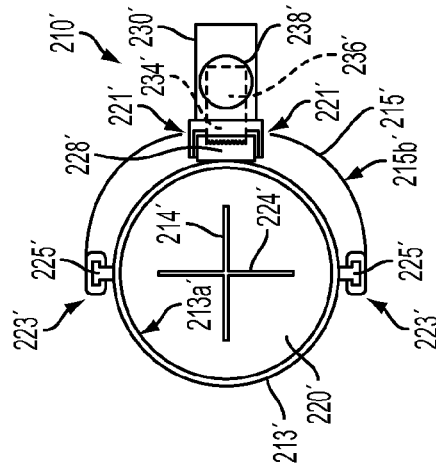


FIG. 8

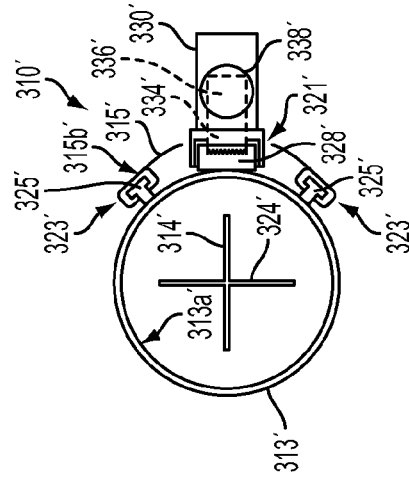


FIG. 9

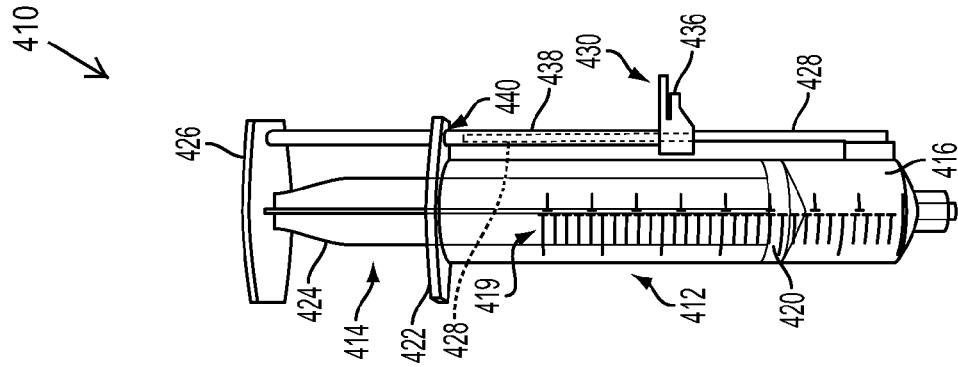


FIG. 10

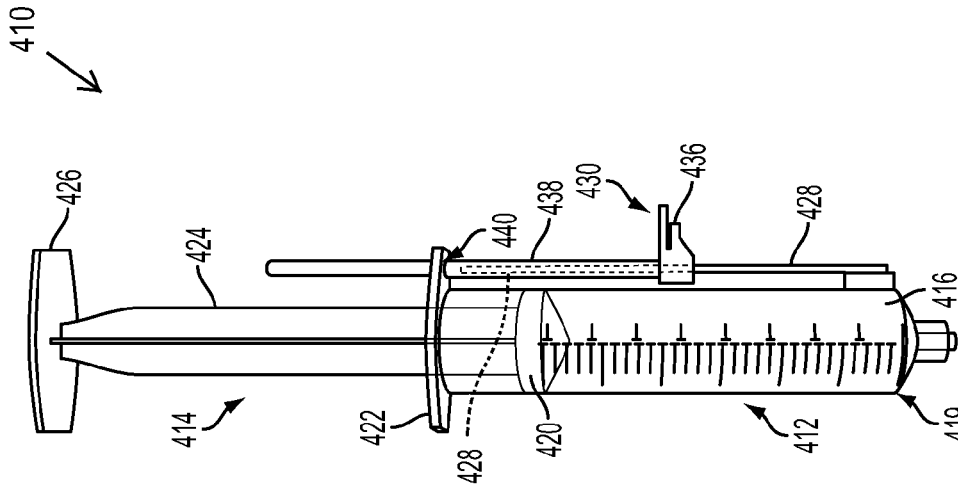


FIG. 11

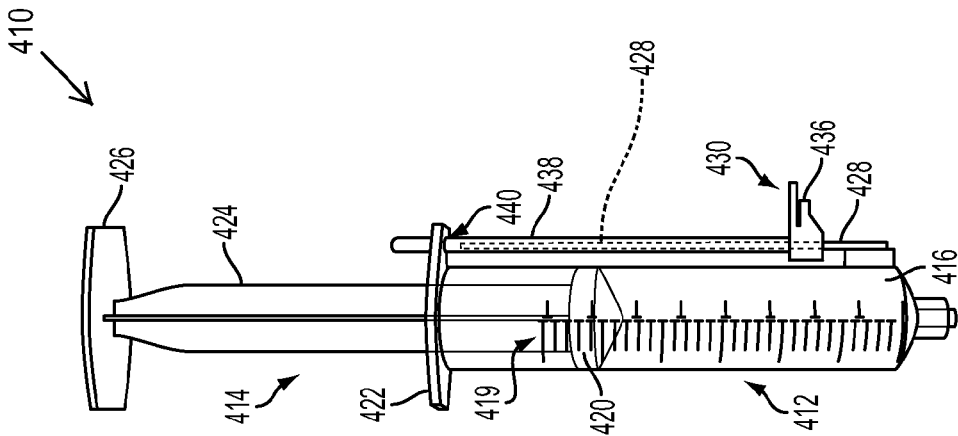


FIG. 12

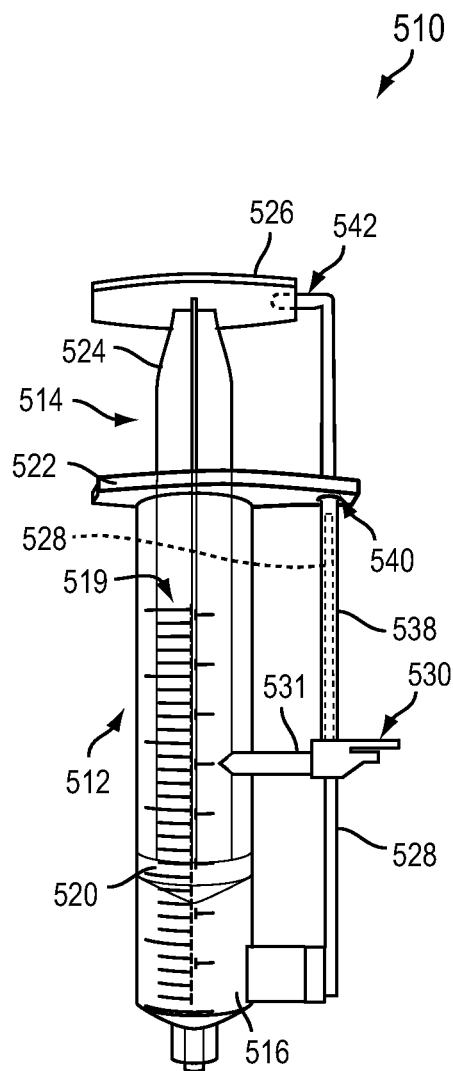


FIG. 13

1

DOSAGE CONTROL SYRINGE**CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

The present application is both a §371 international and a continuation-in-part of International Patent Application No. PCT/US2011/042090, filed Jun. 28, 2011, which claims the benefit of U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 61/359,892, filed Jun. 30, 2010, both of which are hereby incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates in general to the field of syringes, such as for use with hypodermic needles or for irrigating or administering fluids to small areas.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Syringes are frequently used for administering drugs or other fluids to persons of widely-varying sizes, from small children to large adults, with correspondingly varied dosage requirements. Some syringes include indicia that are indicative of the fluid volume of the syringe, but measuring and administering proper dosage of a drug or fluid with such syringes typically requires calculations and accurate manipulation of the syringe to avoid overdosing or underdosing a patient. Administering the proper dosage for a given patient can be difficult since it can require carrying out a complex series of mathematical calculations. This process can be made more difficult by high stress and/or high workload environments, such as in emergency rooms, at accident scenes, or when dealing with critically ill patients, for example.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a dosage control syringe including an adjustable lock member that can be preset in a fixed location along a track or guide on the syringe. The invention may be particularly well-suited for use in high stress and/or high workload environments in which syringes are preloaded with fluid, such as liquid medication, when only a portion of the fluid in the syringe is to be administered to a patient. The syringe includes a barrel and a plunger, and a stop member that moves with the plunger or the adjustable lock member, and engages the other of the plunger or lock member to limit the travel of the plunger. The adjustable lock member is positioned along a track or guide that is disposed along or spaced from the outside of the syringe barrel. The lock member can be locked in a fixed location corresponding to a desired dosage, so that the lock member limits or prevents the plunger from being pushed too far, and thus limits or prevents administering an overdose of the fluid. Thus, the dosage control syringe can be preset for a desired dosage and the dosage may be subsequently administered without visual reference to the syringe or monitoring the position of the plunger along the syringe barrel, because the plunger will be stopped by the lock member, via the stop member, once the preset dosage is reached.

According to one form of the present invention, a dosage control syringe includes a barrel, a plunger, an elongate track or guide, and an adjustable lock member disposed along the track or guide. The barrel includes a longitudinal axis, an outer surface, and an inner surface. The inner surface of the barrel defines a fluid chamber, with both the outer and inner surfaces of the barrel spaced outwardly from the longitudinal

2

axis. The plunger includes a first or lower end portion including a sealing member disposed in the fluid chamber of the barrel. The sealing member slidably and sealingly engages the inner surface of the barrel as the plunger travels along the barrel. A second or upper end portion of the plunger includes a flange extending outwardly away from the longitudinal axis of the barrel. The elongate track or guide is disposed outboard of the outer surface of the barrel, and is generally parallel to the longitudinal axis of the barrel. A stop member is disposed along or outboard of the barrel and aligned generally parallel with the longitudinal axis. The stop member is coupled to one of the adjustable lock member and the plunger flange, and is aligned so that it can selectively contact the other of the adjustable lock member and the plunger flange. When the plunger is moved sufficiently so that the stop member contacts the other of the adjustable lock member and the plunger flange, further movement of the plunger relative to the barrel is substantially precluded.

In one aspect, the adjustable lock member may be set between a locking configuration in which the lock member lockably engages the elongate guide, and a movable configuration in which the lock member is movable along the elongate guide.

In another aspect, the elongate track or guide is established along the outer surface of the barrel.

In a further aspect, the elongate guide is a track on which the adjustable lock member is received. Optionally, the stop member is a tubular member that also receives the track, such as in a telescoping manner. Optionally, the track includes a plurality of ratchet teeth and the lock member includes at least one tooth-engaging projection, the projection being operable to selectively engage at least one of the ratchet teeth to affix the position of the lock member along the elongate track, and the tooth-engaging projection further being operable to selectively disengage the ratchet teeth so that the lock member is movable along the elongate track. Optionally, the adjustable lock member includes a trigger release that can be actuated to disengage the tooth-engaging projection from the ratchet teeth of the track.

In yet another aspect, the stop member is coupled to the adjustable lock member and is configured to be engaged by an upper surface of the plunger flange when the plunger is withdrawn a distance from the barrel, the distance corresponding to a preselected volume of the fluid chamber.

In still another aspect, the barrel is a double-wall barrel having an outer wall and an inner wall. The outer wall is spaced outwardly from the inner wall and includes the outer surface of the barrel, while the inner wall includes the inner surface of the barrel and defines the fluid chamber. Optionally, the outer wall surrounds the entirety of the inner wall, or it may surround about one half of the inner wall, or it may surround less than half of the inner wall.

In yet another aspect, the track or guide is established along the outer surface of the inner wall of the double-wall barrel, and the outer wall includes a slot for receiving the guide and/or the adjustable lock member.

In a further aspect, the outer wall of the barrel includes indicia indicative of dosage. Optionally, the indicia is generally aligned with the elongate track or guide. The adjustable lock member may have a pointer or other indicator that aligns with the indicia to provide a clear indication of dosage corresponding to the position of the lock member.

In a still further aspect, the syringe barrel has a flange that extends generally perpendicular to the barrel's longitudinal axis from the open end of the barrel. The flange includes a through-hole for movably receiving the stop member of the plunger, so that when the stop member moves with the

3

plunger (or when the stop member moves with the adjustable lock member), the stop member moves through the barrel flange through-hole as the plunger moves along the barrel (or as the adjustable lock member moves along the guide or track).

Thus, the dosage control syringe of the present invention provides a pre-settable dosing device that limits the travel of the syringe plunger so that only a desired quantity of medication or other fluid is dispensed from the syringe upon pressing the plunger. The syringe permits accurate dosing without visually monitoring the syringe during administration of the medication or other fluid contained therein.

These and other objects, advantages, purposes, and features of the present invention will become apparent upon review of the following specification in conjunction with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side elevation of a dosage control syringe in accordance with the present invention, including a plunger that is partially withdrawn from the syringe barrel;

FIG. 2 is a side elevation of the dosage control syringe of FIG. 1, in which the plunger's travel is limited by the engagement of the stop member with the adjustable lock member;

FIG. 3 is a side elevation of another dosage control syringe having a double wall around its entire circumference;

FIG. 4 is a side elevation of a dosage control syringe having a double wall around half of its circumference;

FIG. 5 is a top sectional view taken along section line V-V of FIG. 1;

FIG. 6 is a top plan view of the barrel of the syringe of FIG. 1;

FIG. 7 is a sectional view taken along section line VII-VII of FIG. 3;

FIG. 8 is a sectional view of another syringe having a double wall around half of its circumference;

FIG. 9 is a sectional view of a syringe similar to that of FIG. 8, and having a double wall around one quarter of its circumference;

FIG. 10 is a side perspective view of another dosage control syringe, having its plunger mostly extracted and its stop member and adjustable lock member positioned according to a relatively larger dose;

FIG. 11 is another side perspective view of the syringe of FIG. 10, having its plunger fully extracted and its stop member and adjustable lock member positioned according to a relatively smaller dose;

FIG. 12 is another side perspective view of the syringe of FIG. 11, having its plunger pushed down so that it is contacted and stopped by the stop member; and

FIG. 13 is a side perspective view of another dosage control syringe in accordance with the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention is directed to a syringe, and more specifically, to a syringe with a movable or adjustable dosage limiter that allows a user, such as a medical professional or a laboratory technician, to administer a pre-set dosage of fluid from the syringe. As will be more fully described below, the syringe may include a lock member that is movably disposed along a guide, such as an elongate track, that is disposed along or spaced from an outer surface of the syringe. In one embodiment, the lock member is movable along the guide or track, and is engaged or contacted by a stop member that is attached

4

to a portion of a plunger. Optionally, the stop member may be attached to the lock member, and selectively engages the plunger. By adjusting the position of the lock member along the guide or track, a user may control the distance or extent to which the plunger may be pushed or urged along the barrel of the syringe to expel medication or other fluid from the fluid chamber of the syringe.

Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 2, a dosage control syringe 10 includes a barrel 12 and a plunger 14. Barrel 12 includes an inner surface 12a and an outer surface 12b, the inner surface 12a defining a fluid chamber 16. Barrel 12 further includes a flange or "ears" 22 at its open upper end. Barrel 12 supports a hypodermic needle 18 at the barrel's lower end. Barrel 12 may include indicia, such as volumetric gradations or weight-indicative indicia (not shown in FIGS. 1 and 2), to assist a user, such as a medical professional, in selecting proper dosage. Fluid chamber 16 receives plunger 14, which includes a sealing portion 20 at the lower end of a shaft 24, and a plunger flange 26 at the shaft's upper end. It should be understood that references to "upper" and "lower" throughout this specification are only used in the context of the relative positions in the drawings, and are not intended to be limiting in any way.

Disposed along outer surface 12b of barrel 12 is a guide or guide member in the form of an elongate track 28 that movably supports an adjustable lock member 30. Elongate track 28 is parallel to the longitudinal axis of barrel 12, and extends radially from outer surface 12b of barrel 12. As best seen in FIG. 5, elongate track 28 may be generally T-shaped in cross section, while adjustable lock member 30 is generally C-shaped (as viewed from above, e.g., FIG. 5) so that lock member 30 is movably retained along track 28. It will be appreciated that elongate track 28 is merely exemplary of different types of guides or guide members capable of movably supporting an adjustable lock member. Other suitable guides or guide members may include, for example, a slot with elongated side edges that engage an I-shaped lock member, other shapes (i.e. non T-shapes) of elongate tracks, or the like, without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Elongate track 28 includes a plurality of teeth or ribs 32 (FIGS. 1 and 2) that are engaged by a tooth-engaging projection 34 of adjustable lock member 30. In its normal relaxed state or configuration, tooth-engaging projection 34 lockably engages one or more of teeth 32 along track 28. Optionally, the teeth or ribs 32 may be spaced apart from one another by a predetermined distance that corresponds to an incremental change in volume of fluid chamber 16, such as 0.1 mL per tooth 32, for example. In this manner, a user can detect volumetric changes by touch (i.e. by sensing the ratcheting movement of adjustable lock member 30) as well as by visual reference and audible reference (i.e. listening for individual "click" sounds associated with ratcheting). Adjustable lock member 30 includes a trigger release 36 that can be squeezed or depressed to move tooth-engaging projection 34 to a disengaging configuration, so that adjustable lock member 30 may be moved in either direction along track 28 and locked in a position corresponding to an appropriate dosage, such as by aligning the lock member with indicia on the barrel 12.

Optionally, adjustable lock member 30 may be slid or moved upwardly along elongate track 28 (as viewed in FIGS. 1 and 2), with tooth-engaging projection 34 ratcheting or sliding along teeth 32, without actuating trigger release 36. However, adjustable lock member 30 cannot be moved downwardly without first moving tooth-engaging projection 34 to its disengaging configuration by depressing trigger release 36. Therefore, lock member 30 may be readily slid from a lower position along track 28 (corresponding to a larger dose)

5

to a higher position along track 28 (corresponding to a smaller dose) by urging lock member 30 to ratchet upwardly along track 28, but lock member 30 cannot be moved to a lower position along track 28 (corresponding to a larger dose) without first actuating trigger release 36. Thus, adjustable lock member 30 and elongate track 28 may operate or interact in a similar manner as releasable or reusable “zip ties” that are commercially available from numerous suppliers and used for bundling wires and the like.

Plunger 14 supports a stop member 38 that extends or projects downwardly from plunger flange 26 (as viewed in FIGS. 1 and 2), and is parallel to plunger shaft 24 and the longitudinal axis of barrel 12. Stop member 38 is positioned in close proximity to track 28 and generally aligned with adjustable lock member 30. Stop member 38 may be in sliding contact with track 28, or may be spaced from the track. Stop member 38 is supported and guided or maintained in alignment with lock member 30 by barrel flange 22, which includes a through-hole 40 (FIG. 6) that is sized and shaped to receive stop member 38 and to allow the stop member to pass through hole 40. In the illustrated embodiment, stop member 38 is circular in cross section and through-hole 40 is correspondingly circular in shape, although it will be appreciated that substantially any cross section and corresponding hole size and shape may be used. Adjustable lock member 30 includes a generally flat surface that is contacted by stop member 38 (FIG. 2), although the portion of lock member 30 that is contacted by stop member 38 may be concave or cup-shaped, or larger in size, to limit or prevent the tip of stop member 38 from slipping off of the lock member 30, such as when excessive loads are applied to plunger 14.

Optionally, and as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, flange 22 includes a support tube 42 that defines hole 40, and is axially aligned with stop member 38. Support tube 42 has an inner diameter or shape that generally corresponds to the outer diameter or shape of stop member 38, so that the support tube 42 limits or prevents buckling or flexing of the stop member when the stop member is placed under compressive axial loads. Thus, support tube 42 reduces the likelihood that a user would depress flange 26 of plunger 14 with sufficient force to cause the plunger to move a greater distance (corresponding to a higher dosage) than indicated by the position of lock member 30.

Accordingly, syringe 10 may be set for a desired dosage by moving adjustable lock member 30 along track 28 (actuating trigger release 36 as necessary), grasped with one or more fingers positioned below the ears or flange 22 of barrel 12 and the thumb positioned above the plunger flange 26, for example, and squeezed to urge the plunger 14 downwardly relative to barrel 12. The downward motion of sealing portion 20 of plunger 14 expunges fluid from fluid chamber 16 through needle 18 until stop member 38 contacts adjustable lock member 30, which limits or prevents further downward movement of plunger 14. Thus, the amount or dose of fluid dispensed from fluid chamber 16 is set or limited by the position of adjustable lock member 30 along track 28.

Another dosage control syringe 110 operates in a substantially similar manner as described above, but includes a double-wall barrel 112 having an inner wall 113 and an outer wall 115 disposed around the entire circumference of inner wall 113 (FIGS. 3 and 7). Inner wall 113 includes an inner surface 113a defining a fluid chamber 116 in substantially the same manner that inner surface 12a of barrel 12 defines fluid chamber 16 for syringe 10. Outer wall 115 includes an outer surface 115b along which a track 128 is supported. Outer wall 115 is spaced outboard of inner wall 113, with an annular open area 117 defined between the inner and outer walls.

6

Outer surface 115b of outer wall 115 may provide the benefit of increased size, compared to the surfaces of inner wall 113, on which to place indicia 119 (FIG. 3). This may also provide improved visual reference to the position of an adjustable lock member 130 relative to the indicia 119, due to the close proximity of the indicia 119 on outer wall 115 to the lock member 130.

Indicia 119 provides a guide or visual dosage indication with which to align an adjustable lock member 130 on track 128. For example, and as shown, indicia 119 may include volumetric or other types of markings (such as corresponding to patient weight, for example). Other types of indicia may include color-coding or a collar attached to the adjustable lock member and extending around the syringe barrel. Optionally, adjustable lock member 130 includes a pointer or indicator portion 131 that aligns with or points to indicia 119, and moves along the indicia as lock member 130 is moved, to provide the user with a clear visual indication of the dosage corresponding to the position of the lock member 130. It is further envisioned that other types of indicia could be used to aid users such as medical personnel to quickly and easily view, set, and confirm the proper dosage setting of adjustable lock member 130. For example, the adjustable lock member may have a viewing window (e.g., instead of a pointer) that aligns with indicia 119.

A barrel flange 122 is sized to extend beyond the diameter of outer wall 115, on which track 128 is supported, and includes a through-hole (similar to through-hole 40 of syringe 10) for receiving and supporting a stop member 138 in alignment with the adjustable lock member 130. Barrel flange 122 can optionally include a support tube to guide and support stop member 138, similar to barrel flange 22, described above. Various other components of syringe 110 are substantially similar to components of syringe 10 and are given like numerals by the addition of 100, such that the components of syringe 110 may be understood with reference to the above discussion of syringe 10.

Optionally, it will be appreciated that at least some of the benefits of a double-wall barrel may be achieved with an outer wall that surrounds less than the entirety of an inner wall. For example, and with reference to FIG. 4, another dosage control syringe 210 includes an inner wall 213 with an inner surface 213a defining a fluid chamber 216, and an outer wall 215 surrounding approximately one half of the circumference of inner wall 213. Outer wall 215 supports a track 228 on which an adjustable stop member 230 is movably supported, and provides a greater diameter than inner wall 213 on which to place indicia 219. Outer wall 215 may be formed unitarily with inner wall 213, or may be attached to inner wall 213 such as in a manner described below with reference to FIG. 8, in which a dosage control syringe 210' includes an inner wall 213' supporting a track 228', and a half outer wall 215' defining an elongate slot 221' that permits an adjustable lock member 230' to slide along track 228', which is aligned with slot 221'.

Syringe 210' has an outer wall 215' including a pair of C-shaped couplers 223' at opposed ends thereof, and arranged on either side of inner wall 213' (FIG. 8). A pair of corresponding T-shaped elongate projections 225' extend from opposite sides of inner wall 213', for receiving C-shaped couplers 223' of outer wall 215'. Accordingly, outer wall 215' may be slid into engagement with inner wall 213' by sliding C-shaped couplers 223' over and along T-shaped projections 225' or, optionally, C-shaped couplers 223' may be snapped over T-shaped projections 225'. It will be appreciated that various other methods or devices may be used for attaching a

7

partial outer wall to an inner wall, without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Optionally, a syringe **310'** having an outer wall **315'** that surrounds only about one-quarter of an inner wall **313'** may still provide substantial benefits of an outer wall, without fully surrounding the inner wall **313'** (FIG. 9). Like the syringe **110** of FIGS. 3 and 7, various other components of syringes **210**, **210'**, and **310'** that are substantially similar are given like numerals by the addition of **200**, **200'**, or **300'**, respectively, such that the components of the syringes may be understood with reference to the earlier discussion(s) of one or more of syringes **10**, **110**, **210**, and **210'**.

Another dosage control syringe **410**, similar to syringe **10** described above, includes a barrel **412** and plunger **414** (FIGS. 10-12). Unlike syringes **10**, **110**, **210**, **210'**, and **310'**, however, syringe **410** has a stop member **438** that extends or projects upwardly (as viewed in the drawings) from an adjustable lock member **430**, which is repositionable and lockable along an elongate guide in the form of a track **428**. Track **428** and adjustable lock member **430** may be substantially similar or identical to track **28** and adjustable lock member **30** of syringe **10**, described above. In the illustrated embodiment of FIGS. 10-12, stop member **438** is a tubular member having a hollow central portion that receives track **428**, so that stop member **438** and adjustable lock member **430** move together in a telescoping manner relative to track **428**, which remains stationary relative to barrel **412**. Track **428** includes a plurality of evenly-spaced teeth that are engaged by a tooth-engaging projection of the adjustable lock member **430**, similar to the tracks and adjustable lock members described above. Syringe **410** includes a barrel flange **422** having a through-hole **440** for receiving stop member **438**. Rather than being coupled to plunger **414**, stop member **438** is coupled to adjustable lock member **430** so that stop member **438** moves with lock member **430** and moves through hole **440** of barrel flange **422** as lock member **430** is moved or repositioned along track **422**, as shown with reference to FIGS. 10 and 11. It will be appreciated that, optionally, the track and adjustable lock member may be substantially identical to track **28** and adjustable lock member **30**, described above, but with the stop member coupled to the adjustable lock member so that these components move together. Various other components of syringe **410** are substantially similar to components of syringe **10** and are given like numerals by the addition of **400**, such that the components of syringe **410** may be understood with reference to the above discussion of syringe **10**.

The desired dosage may be set with the dosage control syringe **410** by repositioning adjustable lock member **430** along track **428** while plunger **414** is at least partially extracted from barrel **412** (FIGS. 10 and 11). This in turn repositions stop member with its upper end spaced a distance from the underside of plunger flange **426** according to the desired dose (FIG. 11). When plunger **414** is urged downwardly along barrel **412** to expel fluid from fluid chamber **416**, plunger **414** moves freely until plunger flange **426** contacts and is halted by stop member **438** (FIG. 12), which is fixed against downward movement by adjustable lock member **430** on track **428**. Accordingly, syringe **410** functions in a similar manner as syringe **10**, but with a stop member **438** that is coupled to adjustable lock member **430** and is contacted by the syringe flange **426** when the proper dose has been expelled from fluid chamber **416**, rather than a stop member that is coupled to a syringe flange, and that contacts an adjustable lock member when the proper dose has been expelled.

Another dosage control syringe **510**, is similar in some respects to syringe **410** described above, and includes a barrel **512** and plunger **514** (FIGS. 10-12). Unlike the syringe **410**,

8

however, syringe **510** has a stop member **538** with an upper stop portion **542** that extends laterally over a portion of a plunger flange **526**. Upper stop portion **542** is engaged by plunger flange **526** when the plunger **514** has been withdrawn a distance corresponding to the pre-selected volume indicated by a pointer or indicator portion **531**, which projects from an adjustable lock member **530** that is movably and selectively lockably disposed along track **528**. When lock member **530** is released by the user, it is locked in position along a track **528**, so that upper stop portion **542** limits the distance that plunger **514** can be withdrawn when plunger flange **526** engages stop portion **542**.

Track **528** and adjustable lock member **530** may be substantially similar or identical to track **428** and adjustable lock member **430** of syringe **410**, described above, including a tubular stop member **538** having a hollow central portion that receives track **528**. Barrel flange **522** projects further outwardly than the flange **422** of syringe **410**, and defines a through-hole **540** for receiving stop member **538**. Stop member **538** is coupled to adjustable lock member **530** so that stop member **538** moves with lock member **530** and moves through hole **540** of barrel flange **522** as lock member **530** is moved or repositioned along track **522**, as shown with reference to FIG. 13. Prior to use of syringe **510**, plunger **514** is typically inserted fully into barrel **512** so that plunger flange **526** is in close proximity to barrel flange **522**, and stop member **538** (and lock member **530**) may also be fully lowered or retracted so that upper stop portion **542** rests atop or adjacent plunger flange **526**. Various other components of syringe **510** are substantially similar to components of syringe **10** and are given like numerals by the addition of **500**, such that the components of syringe **510** may be understood with reference to the above discussion of syringe **10**.

The desired dosage is typically set with the dosage control syringe **510** by repositioning adjustable lock member **530** along track **528** while plunger **514** is fully retracted into the barrel **512**. This in turn repositions stop member **538** with its upper stop portion **542** spaced a distance outwardly beyond the upper surface of plunger flange **526**, so that plunger **514** will stop once it has been withdrawn a distance that corresponds to a desired volume set by lock member, which draws a pre-selected volume of liquid into barrel **512**. When plunger **514** is urged downwardly along barrel **512** to expel fluid from fluid chamber **516**, plunger **514** moves freely until the entire volume of fluid has been expelled.

Accordingly, rather than dispensing only a predetermined portion of the contents of the syringe, dosage control syringe **510** is configured so that the entire contents is pre-measured by medical personnel (e.g. by drawing the liquid medication into barrel **512** from a vial). The entire pre-measured contents in barrel **512** may then be dispensed into the patient, as opposed to dispensing only a portion of a larger volume of liquid, as with the other syringes described above.

Thus, the present invention provides a dosage control syringe that can be pre-set according to a desired dosage by moving an adjustable lock member along a track, such as to align the lock member with indicia visible along the outer wall of the barrel, and then depressing a plunger whose travel is limited (during either a withdrawal stroke or an injection stroke) by the adjustable lock member. In some embodiments, any fluid remaining in the fluid chamber after the pre-set dosage has been expelled from the syringe can be reserved for use with the same patient or, more likely, can be discarded. In other embodiments, the fluid in the syringe is pre-measured according to the position of the lock member, so that the entire liquid volume will be dispensed. Once the adjustable lock member is set and the syringe is at least

partially filled with fluid, the desired dose of fluid may be dispensed from the syringe without visual reference to the syringe. Thus, a syringe may be preset to a desired dosage for a patient well before the fluid in the syringe is needed for the patient, and administered without further reference to the syringe, to reduce the likelihood of dosing errors that may be more likely to occur during high workload and/or high stress medical situations.

Although primarily described with reference to syringes equipped with hypodermic needles for medical use, it will be appreciated that the present invention is applicable to other medical uses, such as irrigating wounds with cleansing or antibiotic fluids, or for administering oral medications. It will further be appreciated that non-medical applications are envisioned for the invention, including substantially any use or application in which it is desirable to dispense a measured quantity of fluid from a syringe or a syringe-like device, particularly when less than all of the fluid in the device is to be dispensed. Such applications may include, for example, use in chemical, biological, or medical laboratories.

Changes and modifications in the specifically described embodiments may be carried out without departing from the principles of the present invention, which is intended to be limited only by the scope of the appended claims, as interpreted according to the principles of patent law including the doctrine of equivalents.

The invention claimed is:

1. A syringe comprising:

a barrel defining a fluid chamber and having a longitudinal axis;

a plunger at least partially disposed in said fluid chamber of said barrel and having a sealing member for slidably and sealingly engaging said barrel, said plunger having a plunger flange extending outwardly away from the longitudinal axis and laterally outboard of said barrel;

an elongate guide disposed along said barrel;

an adjustable lock member movably disposed along said elongate guide;

a stop member coupled to one of said adjustable lock member and said plunger flange and aligned so as to selectively contact the other of said adjustable lock member and said plunger flange; and

wherein when said plunger is moved sufficiently so that said stop member contacts said other of said adjustable lock member and said plunger flange, further movement of said plunger relative to said barrel is substantially precluded.

2. The syringe of claim 1, wherein said lock member is configurable between a locking configuration in which said lock member lockably engages said elongate guide, and a movable configuration in which said lock member is movable along said elongate guide.

3. The syringe of claim 2, wherein said elongate guide comprises a track having plurality of ratchet teeth and said lock member comprises a tooth-engaging projection, said tooth-engaging projection being operable to selectively engage at least one of said ratchet teeth wherein said lock member lockably engages said track, and to selectively disengage said ratchet teeth wherein said lock member is movable along said track.

4. The syringe of claim 3, wherein said lock member comprises a trigger release operable to disengage said tooth-engaging projection from said ratchet teeth of said track.

5. The syringe of claim 3, wherein said plurality of ratchet teeth are evenly spaced from one another in a manner that corresponds to fixed-increment volumetric changes of said

fluid chamber when said plunger is moved so that said stop member contacts said other of said adjustable lock member and said plunger flange.

6. The syringe of claim 3, wherein said stop member comprises a tubular member attached to said adjustable lock member, said tubular member receiving said track in a telescoping manner.

7. The syringe of claim 1, wherein said barrel comprises an outer surface and wherein said elongate guide is established along said outer surface.

8. The syringe of claim 1, wherein said barrel comprises a double-wall barrel having an outer wall spaced outwardly from an inner wall, said inner wall comprising an inner surface defining said fluid chamber, and said outer wall comprising an outer surface.

9. The syringe of claim 8, wherein said guide is established along said outer surface of said outer wall.

10. The syringe of claim 8, wherein said guide is established along an outer surface of said inner wall, and wherein said outer wall comprises a slot for receiving said guide and/or said adjustable lock member.

11. The syringe of claim 1, wherein said outer wall of said barrel comprises indicia indicative of dosage.

12. The syringe of claim 11, wherein said indicia are generally aligned with said elongate guide.

13. The syringe of claim 1, wherein said barrel comprises a barrel flange extending generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, said barrel flange comprising an opening for receiving said stop member of said plunger, and wherein said stop member moves through said opening of said barrel flange as said plunger travels along said barrel.

14. The syringe of claim 1, wherein said barrel comprises a barrel flange extending generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, said barrel flange comprising an opening for receiving said stop member of said plunger, and wherein said stop member moves through said opening of said barrel flange as said adjustable stop member moves along said elongate guide.

15. The syringe of claim 1, further comprising at least one chosen from a hypodermic needle and a nozzle in communication with said fluid chamber for directing a fluid out of said fluid chamber.

16. The syringe of claim 1, wherein said stop member is coupled to said adjustable lock member and is configured to be engaged by an upper surface of said plunger flange when said plunger is withdrawn a distance from said barrel corresponding to a preselected volume of said fluid chamber.

17. A syringe comprising:

a barrel having a longitudinal axis, an outer surface, and an inner surface, said inner surface defining a fluid chamber, said outer and inner surfaces spaced outwardly from the longitudinal axis;

a plunger having first and second opposed end portions, said first end portion disposed in said fluid chamber of said barrel and having a sealing member disposed at said first end portion, said sealing member slidably and sealingly engaging said inner surface of said barrel, said second end portion having a plunger flange, said plunger flange extending outwardly away from the longitudinal axis;

an elongate guide disposed outboard of said inner surface of said barrel and aligned generally parallel with the longitudinal axis;

an adjustable lock member movably disposed along said elongate guide;

a stop member disposed outboard of said outer surface of said barrel and aligned generally parallel with the lon-

11

itudinal axis, said stop member coupled to one of said adjustable lock member and said plunger flange and aligned so as to selectively contact the other of said adjustable lock member and said plunger flange; and wherein when said plunger is moved sufficiently so that said stop member contacts said other of said adjustable lock member and said plunger flange, further movement of said plunger relative to said barrel is substantially precluded.

18. The syringe of claim 17, wherein said lock member is configurable between a locking configuration in which said lock member lockably engages said elongate guide, and a movable configuration in which said lock member is movable along said elongate guide.

19. The syringe of claim 18, wherein said elongate guide comprises a track having plurality of ratchet teeth and said lock member comprises a tooth-engaging projection, said tooth-engaging projection being operable to selectively engage at least one of said ratchet teeth wherein said lock member lockably engages said track, and to selectively disengage said ratchet teeth wherein said lock member is movable along said track.

20. The syringe of claim 19, wherein said lock member comprises a trigger release operable to disengage said tooth-engaging projection from said ratchet teeth of said track.

21. The syringe of claim 17, wherein said elongate guide is established along said outer surface of said barrel.

22. The syringe of claim 17, wherein said barrel comprises a double-wall barrel having an outer wall spaced outwardly from an inner wall, said inner wall comprising said inner surface defining said fluid chamber, and said outer wall comprising said outer surface.

12

23. The syringe of claim 22, wherein said guide is established along said outer surface of said outer wall.

24. The syringe of claim 22, wherein said guide is established along an outer surface of said inner wall, and wherein said outer wall comprises a slot for receiving said guide and/or said adjustable lock member.

25. The syringe of claim 17, wherein said outer wall of said barrel comprises indicia indicative of dosage.

26. The syringe of claim 25, wherein said indicia are generally aligned with said elongate guide.

27. The syringe of claim 25, wherein said lock member comprises an indicator that aligns with said indicia to indicate the dosage corresponding to the position of said lock member on said elongate guide.

28. The syringe of claim 17, wherein said barrel comprises a barrel flange extending generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, said barrel flange comprising an opening for receiving said stop member of said plunger, and wherein said stop member moves through said opening of said barrel flange as said plunger travels along said barrel.

29. The syringe of claim 28, wherein said barrel flange comprises a support tube defining said opening and supporting said stop member of said plunger to limit buckling or flexing of said stop member.

30. The syringe of claim 17, further comprising at least one chosen from a hypodermic needle and a nozzle in communication with said fluid chamber for directing a fluid out of said fluid chamber.

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